

Housing Comprehensive Plan Task Force

Meeting Summary November 15, 2006

Task Force members present: Jim Bellus (Chair), John Couchman, Jim Erchul, Jon Gutzmann, Shawn Huckleby, Susan McCall, Glen McCluskey, Marjorie Mangine, Margy Mattlin, Harry Melander, Gaius Nelson, Paul Rebholz, Jim Solem, Terri Thao, Missy Thompson, Mary Tingerthal, Maureen Warren

Members absent: Jim Carlson-Otero, Beverley Hawkins, Ilean Her, Glen McCluskey, Harry Melander, Glen McCluskey, Marilyn Porter (excused), Ellen Watters, Linda White (excused)

Staff: Gary Peltier, Luis Pereira, Yang Zhang

Guests: John Buzza, Todd Graham, Alicia Huckleby, Cindy Porter, Steve Schellenberg, Mark Vander Schaaf

Chair Bellus opened the meeting with introductions. He gave a brief overview of the goals of the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and the Task Force's charges. A new member, Terri Thao from Payne-Lake Community Partners, has joined the Task Force.

Mark Vander Schaaf, Director of Data Resources with the Metropolitan Council, discussed four key premises regarding the Twin Cities area in the next 30 years: 1) 1 million more people in the 7-county metro area, 2) Growth will outpace the transportation system, 3) Finite land supply and transportation system will result in rising land prices, and 4) Significant redevelopment and intensification of land use are anticipated in the core cities. Region-wide, four demographic trends will likely shape the region's housing market: 1) Diversification by race and national origin, 2) Diversification by age, 3) Shifting income patterns, and 4) Diversification by household type. Minorities accounted for 20% of the region's population in 2005, a substantial increase from 9% in 1990 and 17% in 2000. The increase is largely attributed to immigration. The overall population in the Twin Cities region has longer life expectancies than before, and among non-immigrant families, small household sizes. Relative income (in 2005 dollars) has increased between 1990 and 2005, both for the region and the city of Saint Paul. The Twin Cities have retained the largest middle class among the 100 biggest cities in the United States. In terms of household types, families with one or two children have become the most common, there are more empty nesters, and more widow/er households/seniors live alone. In the local level—i.e. the city level—the Met. Council asserts that the local housing stock will determine the demographics it attracts.

Cindy Porter from the Saint Paul Public Schools talked about trends in the school district. Enrollment has been declining since 1998 for both public and private schools. In 2003-2004, there were roughly the same numbers of Caucasian, Asian, and African American students. The number of Caucasian students continued to decrease while Asian and African American students continued to increase. In terms of geographic distribution, there is a large concentration of Asian students in Thomas-Dale and on the East Side. Latino students remain a strong presence on the West Side, although the actual number of Latino students on the East Side is twice that of the West Side. African American students are largely concentrated in the Summit-University, Thomas-Dale,

Dayton's Bluff, and Payne-Phalen areas. Caucasian students are fairly equally distributed throughout the city. In 2004-2005, more than 60% of the students were eligible for free lunch and 10% for reduced-price lunch. Forty-one percent of the district's students speak a language other than English at home, and 37% receive English learner's assistance. American Indian, African American, and Latino students also experience higher mobility within one school year. A large number of students live in rental housing. The Housing 5000 Program did not have much effect on the school district, as the new housing was mostly designed for smaller families (1- and 2-bedroom units).

Luis Pereira from the City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development spoke about demographic and housing trends for the city. The Met Council projections show that Saint Paul will grow by 15,000 people, or 7,000 new households, between 2010 and 2020. In 2005, about 43% of all households are nonfamily households, 48% family households, and 8% other family households. In terms of the number of people, 37% of all households have just one person, and 29% have two people. Minority groups are projected to grow significantly in the next decade (57% for Hispanics, 31% for Asians, and 36% for African Americans). Housing affordability has decreased since 2000. For renters, cost-burdened households (paying more than 30% of income on housing) went up from 41% to 51% from 2000 to 2005. Cost-burdened owner-occupied households went up from 20% to 34% during the same period. A study by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development and Center for Neighborhood Technology suggests that affordability should be measured by computing the combined costs of housing and transportation.

The Met Council recently allocated affordable housing units (affordable to <60% of area median income) to cities within the 7-county area. Saint Paul has been allocated 2,625 new units. The allocation was based on a formula considering existing affordable housing, jobs, and transportation. The Met Council requires that the municipalities' comprehensive plans address how these units will be provided. Luis also provided an overview of the Housing 5000 Program. Two recent trends were highlighted: vacant buildings and foreclosures. The number of vacant buildings has grown steadily in the last two years, especially in Ward 6 (Payne-Phalen). As of November 1, there were 803 registered vacant houses in Saint Paul. Wards 6 and 7 (East Side, Greater East Side, and Southeast) have the most foreclosures, followed by Ward 5. When displayed by planning district, District 5 (Payne-Phalen) and District 6 (North End) have the most foreclosures.

The Task Force discussed population projections, particularly seniors. The distribution of the income brackets may suggest that a housing strategy that addresses all incomes is needed, although lower-income minority populations continue to concentrate in a few inner city neighborhoods. The Task Force also suggested that the City of Saint Paul challenge the rest of the region to provide a fair share of affordable housing units.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Community Comment Meeting: 4 to 6 p.m., Wednesday, November 29, 2006, at Hamline-Midway Library, 1558 W Minnehaha Avenue.

Task Force Meeting: 4 to 6 p.m., Wednesday, January 17, 2007, at Rondo Outreach Library, 461 N Dale St.